African American Vernacular English and Popular Culture Summary

The reason why I chose to do a research on African American Vernacular English was because I was highly interested in their subculture, that is their music (especially rap), and I was curious about how it finally became mainstream in American pop music industry. The goal of my presentation is to educate my fellow classmates on what is African American Vernacular English, their special phonology and grammar, and some deeper things related to their culture. I think music is another form of representation of black English, what’s more, according to the Author of *Black Talk*, Ben Sidran, “Music is not only a reflection of the values of black culture but, to some extent, the basis upon which it is built…the investigation of black music is also the investigation of the black mind ,the black social orientation ,and primarily , the black culture.” And in my opinion, rap music is especially worthwhile of researching because rap lyrics are just like hidden scripts, full of jargons and inner jokes, await us to decode them. Once we dig further, we will see rap music is their only way out of the social/ racial inequality they face, and by this way ,they can unleash their anger, so that life can still go on .

In order to make my fellow classmates understand black English better in rap songs, I downloaded several different music videos of rap songs, respectively singing about sex, drugs, gangsters, and their social backgrounds, and by explaining the black slangs to my fellow classmates, they will have a grasp of African Americans’ value system, their feelings, and so on.

My conclusion is that the rap lyrics often are bold , provoking and controversial, and it is because it’s rebelliousness that it expands its influence, therefore white young people are attracted to it , and it makes its way into mainstream music.

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